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The Press.

BY HORACE GREELY.

Long slumbered the world in the darkness of error,
And ignorance brooded o'er earth like a pall:
To the mitre and crown men abased them in terror,
Though galling the bondage and bitter the thrall:
When a voice like the earthquake's revealed the dishonor—
A flash like the lightning's unseal'd every eye,
And o'er hill-top and glen floated liberty's banner,
While round it men gather'd to conquer or die!

'Twas the voice of the press—on the startled ear breaking,
In giant-born prowess, like PALLAS of old:
'Twas the flash of intelligence gloriously waking
A glow on the cheek of the noble and bold;
And tyranny's minions, o'erawed and affrighted,
Sought a lasting retreat in the cloister and cowl,
And the chains which bound nations in ages benighted
Were cast to the haunts of the bat and the owl.

Then hail to the Press! chosen guardian of freedom!
Strong sword-arm of justice! bright sun beam of truth!
We pledge to her cause, (and she has but to heed them,)
The strength of our manhood, the fire of our youth:
Should despots e'er dare to impede her free soaring,
Or biggot to fetter her flight with his chain,
We swear that the earth shall close o'er our deploring
Or view her gladness and freedom again.

But no!—to the day-dawn of knowledge and glory,
A far brighter noontide-refulgence succeeds;
And our art shall embalm, through all ages, in story,
Her champion who triumphs—her martyr who bleeds—
And proudly her sons shall recall their devotion,
While millions shall listen to honor and bless,
Till there bursts a response from the heart's strong emotion,
And the earth echoes deep with "Long life to the Press!"

The Only Son.

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.

Mr. Harcourt sat alone in his study. The walls were crowded with book cases, filled with the massy tomes of the law; his table was covered with papers of importance, and a pile of notes, which had just been paid him by a client, lay close at his elbow. The costly lamp that hung above his head threw its light full upon the upper part of his face, bringing the masy brow out into bold relief, and giving additional sternness and promise to his cold and inflexible features. All at once he rang the bell.

"Is master James arrived," he said sharply when the servant entered.

"Yes, sir."

In a few minutes the door of the study opened again, and the lawyer's only son stood in the presence of his father. He was a youth of about seventeen, fair and manly to gaze upon, but with that look of dissipation in his countenance which mars the noblest beauty. An expression of feminine softness and irresolution in his face, contradicted the proud and self-willed glance of his dark glowing eye. He seemed indeed, to judge from his looks, to be wholly a creature of impulse.

"So you have been in another scrape, sir," said the old man harshly.

The youth bowed his head and bit his lip.

"It cost me four hundred dollars to pay for the carriage that was broken, and the horse foundered in your drunken frolic. What have you to say to that, sir?"

The young man's eyes wandered irresolutely around the room, without daring to meet his father's face. Nor did he make any reply.

"How long is this to last?" said his parent in an angry tone. "Have I not told you again and again, that I would disown you if these things went on? You are a disgrace, sir, to me—a blot to my name. Thank God, your mother did not live to see you grow up!"

The youth had evidently been nerving himself to bear his father's rebukes with as much indifference and coolness as possible; but at the mention of his mother's name his lip quivered, and he turned away his head to hide the tears that gathered in his eyes. Had that stern, irritable old man known how to follow up the chord he had struck, his son might yet have been saved; but he was a hard, correct man, unaccustomed to make allowances for difference of character, and he resolved to drive his son into obedience by the strong arm of parental authority.

"You turn away to laugh, you rascal, do you?" said he, enraged. "You believe, because you are my child, I will not disinherit you. But I would cast you off if you were ten times my son; and I made up my mind to-day to tell you at once to go. There is a pile of notes—five hundred dollars, I believe—take it, and to-morrow I will make it a thousand before you depart. But remember, this is the last night you shall spend under my roof—the last cent of my money you shall ever touch."

When his mother was alluded to, the youth had almost made up his mind to step forward, ask pardon for his evil course, and promise solemnly hereafter to live a life of strict propriety; but the sharp and angry tone in which Mr. Harcourt pursued the conversation, and the word banishment with which it closed, seemed to make him irresolute. He colored, turned pale, and parted his lips as if to speak; then he clasped his hands in supplication; but the cold, contemptuous look of his father checked him, and he remained silent. The angry flush, however, rose again to his cheek, and became fixed there.

"Not a word, sir," said the father. "It is too late for pleading now. Don't be both a blackguard and a coward. I told you if you ever got into a discreditable difficulty I would disown you. But warning did no good. You must reap as you have sown. Will you go?"

The youth seemed again about to speak, but his words choked him. The spirit of the son, as well as that of the father, was roused. He felt that the punishment was disproportioned to the offence, even great as it had been. He took the notes which his parent held out to him, crumbled them hastily together, and flinging them scornfully back, turned and left the room. The next instant the street door closed with a heavy clang.

"He has not gone, surely?" said the father, startled for a moment. But his brow darkened as his eye fell on the notes. "Yet let him go—the heartless villian—he is hereafter no son of mine.—Better die childless than have an heir who is a disgrace to your name. Did I not do my duty to him?" Ay! old man, that is the question. *Did* you do your duty to him? Were you not harsh when you should have been lenient—did you not neglect your son years after his mother's death, careless of what kind of associates he consorted with—and when he had been led astray, did you not, in total disregard of his wilful character, the result of your own indulgence, did you not, we say, attempt to coerce him by threats, when you should have drawn him by the gentle chord of love?—Look into your own heart; see if you are not just as unreasonable as your son. Can a character be formed in a day! Your profession should have taught you better, old man. But the boy has gone from your roof forever, for well he knows how inflexible is your stern, self-righteous heart; and, indeed, with a portion of your own pride, he would sooner cut off his right arm than solicit or accept your aid. Yes! take up that mass of complicated papers, and endeavor to forget the past scenes in their absorbing details. But yours must be a heart of adamant, if in despite of your oft repeated reasoning, you can justify your reasoning to it. Remember the words you have uttered. They may apply to more than you,—"*As you have sown so shall you reap.*"

James Harcourt went forth from his father's house in utter despair. Pride had supported him during the last few moments of the interview, and he had met his stern parent's malediction with utter defiance; but when the door had closed upon him, and he turned to take a last look at the window which was once his mother's, the tears gushed again into his eyes, and covering his face in his hands, he sat down on a neighboring step and sobbed convulsively. "Oh! if she had been living," he said, "it would never have come to this. She would not have left me to form associations with those who wished to make a prey of me—she would not have galled me by stern and undeserved reproaches—she would not have turned me from my house, with no place whither to go, and the temptations around me on every side. Oh! my mother," he said, casting his eyes to heaven, "look down on me and pity your poor boy."

At that instant the door of his father's house opened, as if some one was about to come forth. A momentary hope shot through him that his parent had relented. But no! it was only a servant who had been called to close the shutters. Ashamed to be recognized, the youth hastily arose, turned a corner, and disappeared.

* * * * * * *

Years rolled on. The lawyer rose in wealth and consideration; honors were heaped profusely on him; he became a member of congress, a senator, a judge. His sumptuous carriage rolled through the streets daily, to bear him too and from court. An invitation to his dinners were received in triumph, they were so select. In every respect Judge Harcourt was a man to be envied.

But was he happy? He might have been, reader, but for one thing. He *had no one to love.* He felt that people courted him only from interested motives. Oh! how he sometimes longed to know what had become of his discarded boy, confessing to himself, now that years had removed the veil from his eyes, how horribly he had used the culprit.

"Perhaps, if I had borne with him a little longer, he might have reformed," he said with a sigh. "He always had a good heart, and his poor mother used to say he was so obedient. But he got led away!"

At this instant a servant cautiously opened his library door."

"It is almost ten o'clock, your honor," he said, "and the carriage is at the door."

"Ay, ay," said the judge rising, as the servant disappeared. I had forgot myself. And that desperate fellow, Roberts, is to be tried to-day for the mail robbery."

Many an obsequious bow greeted the judge as the officers of the court made way for him through the crowd, for the trial was one of unusual interest, and had collected together large numbers. He smiled affably to all, and taking his seat, ordered the business to proceed. The prisoner was brought in, a large, bold, fine-looking man, but the judge, occupied with a case he had heard the day before, and in which he was writing out an opinion, gave little notice to the criminal, or indeed to any of the proceedings, until the usual formalities had been gone through, and the serious part of the evidence had began to be heard. Then the judge, for the first time, directed a keen glance to the prisoner. "Surely I have seen that face before," he said. But he could not remember where; and he turned to scrutinize the jury box.

The case was a clear one. The testimony, when completed, formed a mass of evidence that was irresistible. Two men swore positively to the person of the accused as that of one of the robbers, and the jury immediately gave a verdict of guilty, after a bitterly severe charge against the prisoner from the bench. The punishment was death.

On hearing the verdict, the prisoner set his mouth firmly, and drew himself up to his full height. But before sentence was pronounced, he asked leave to say a few words. He did it in so earnest a tone that the judge immediately granted it, wondering that a man who looked so courageous should stop to beg for his life.

"I acknowledge my crime," said the prisoner, "nor do I seek to palliate it—nor either do I ask for mercy. I can face death—I have faced it a dozen times. But I wish to say a word on the case that brought me to this place."

Every neck was strained forward to catch the words of the speaker; even the judge leaned over the bench, controlled by an interest for which he could not account.

"I was born of respectable, nay, distinguished parents," said the man, "and one, at least, was an angel. But she died early, and my father, immersed in ambitious schemes, quite forgot me, so that I was left to form my own associations, which, therefore, were not all of the most unexceptionable kind. By and by my irregularities began to attract my father's notice. He reproved me too harshly. Recollect, I was spoilt by indulgence. I soon committed another youthful folly. My punishment this time was more severe and quite as ill advised as before. I was a creature of impulse, pliable either for good or bad—and my only surviving parent fell into the error of attempting to drive me when he should have persuaded me with kindness. The fact is neither of us understood each other. Well, matters went on thus for two years and more; I was extravagant, rebellious, dissipated; my parent was hard and unforgiving.

"At length," continued the speaker, turning full on the judge until their eyes met, "at length one evening my parent sent for me into the study. I had been guilty of some youthful folly, and having threatened me about a fortnight before with disinheritance if I again vexed him, he now told me that henceforth I was to be no child of his, but an outcast and a beggar. He said too that he thanked God that my mother had not lived to see that day. *That* touched me. Had he then spoken kindly—had he given me a chance, I might have reformed—but he irritated me with hard words, checked my rising promptings of good by condemning me unheard, and sent me forth alone in the world.—From that hour," continued the prisoner, speaking rapidly and with great emotion, "I was desperate. I went out from his door a homeless, penniless, friendless boy. My former associates would have shrunk from me, even if I had not been too proud to seek them. All decent society was shut against me. I soon became almost starved for want of money. But what needs it to tell the shifts I was driven to! I slept in miserable hovels—I consorted with the lowest and vilest—I gambled, I cheated, and yet I could scarcely get my bread. You, who sit in luxurious homes, know not the means to which the miserable outcast must have resorted for a livelihood! But enough—from one step I passed to another, till I am here. From the moment I was cast out of my father's house, my fate was inevitable, leading me by constantly descending steps, until I became the felon I now am. And I stand here to-day, ready to endure the utmost penalty of your laws, careless of the future, as I have been reckless of the past."

He ceased; and now released from the torrent of his passionate eloquence, which had chained their eyes to him, the spectators turned toward the judge, to see what effect the prisoner's words had produced. Well was it that no one had looked there before, else that proud man had sunk cowering from his seat. They would have seen how his eye gradually quailed before that of the speaker—how he turned ashy pale—how his whole face at length became convulsed with agony. Ay! old man, remorse was now fully awake. In the criminal he had recognized his own son. He thought then of the words he had once used—"*As you have sown, so shall you reap.*" But by a mighty effort he was enabled to hear the prisoner to the end, and then, feeling as if every eye was upon him, penetrating his terrible secret in his looks, he sank, with a groan, senseless to the earth.

The confusion that occurred in the court house, when it was found that the judge had been taken suddenly ill, as the physician said by a stroke of apoplexy, led to the postponement of the prisoner's sentence; and before the next session of the court, the prisoner had received a conditional pardon, the result, it was said of the mitigating circumstances which he had urged so eloquently on his trial. The terms on which a large portion of citizens petitioned for his pardon, required that he should forever after reside abroad. It was said that the judge, although scarcely recovered, had taken such an interest in the prisoner as to visit him in a long and secret interview, the night before he sailed for Europe.

About a year after these events, Judge Harcourt resigned his office on the plea of ill health, and having settled his affairs, embarked for the old world where he intended to reside for many years. He never returned to America. Travellers said that he was residing in a secluded valley of Italy, with a man in the prime of life, who passed for his adopted son. A smiling family of grand children surrounded him. The happy father could say, in the language of scripture, "this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

AS GOOD AS IF IT WERE ÆSOP.—The Nantucket Islander says the following story was lately told by a reformed inebriate, as an apology for much of the folly of drunkards:

"A mouse ranging about a brewery, happening to fall into a vat of beer, was in imminent danger of drowning, and appealed to a cat to help him out. The cat replied it is a foolish request, for as soon as I get you out I shall eat you. The mouse replied, that fate would be much better than to be drowned in beer. The cat lifted him out, but the fume of the beer caused puss to sneeze, and the mouse took refuge in his hole. The cat called on the mouse to come out—'You, sir, did you not promise that I should eat you?' 'Ah,' replied the mouse, 'but you know *I was in liquor at the time.*'"

☞ Happily in the moral world as in the material one, the warring elements have their prescribed bounds, and the "flood of grief decreaseth, when it can swell no higher;" but it is only by retrospection we can bring ourselves to believe in this obvious truth. The young and untried heart hugs itself in the bitterness of its emotions, and takes a pride in believing that its anguish can but end with its existence; and it is not till time hath almost steeped our senses in forgetfulness, that we discover the mutability of all human passions.

☞ Rebuke sin; rebuke it faithfully yet humbly—considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Be sure and oppose wickedness, but do it like Jesus, not like Jehu.

☞ He who throws *self* away comes to *himself*, and enjoys all things. But he who holds self fast puts out his own eyes, and casts himself into utter darkness.

GOOD ADVICE.—Have we in any manner done wrong to another? Let us not be backward in making reparation for it; not hesitating an instant, but nobly breaking through the restraints of pride and shame that would be our hinderance.

☞ He is truly a happy man who can upon any occasion accommodate himself to his circumstances.